



Chairman's Comments

As I write this I see snow falling outside the window. Not many weeks to the warm, dry Spring I am confidently predicting!

On 3rd February 5 members of the committee joined about 50 friends and family of Ron Gordon for the official opening of the 'Ron Gordon Way' in Aughton. Many members will remember Ron as not only a very active leader but also as our footpath inspector for many years. His knowledge of footpaths and his determination to preserve the network were vital and his efforts and knowledge will be missed across the region. Although Ron lived in Aughton, much of his work was with the Merseyside & West Cheshire Area group of the Ramblers, who decided to create a memorial to Ron. See the back page for more detail.

Thanks to Ann and to all the leaders. As we prepare for the next programme of walks can leaders please remember that the daytime walks should not exceed 6 miles, and the Canal & Countryside walks should not exceed 4 miles, with a slightly slower pace as we hope to that these walks might attract some less experienced walkers. Thanks to the committee whose hard work enables us to continue to provide a valuable service to the walkers of West Lancashire. I'm still hoping for a volunteer to be Secretary! You just need to be able to take minutes and send emails. Any takers?

To conform with the requirements of the insurance policy, we have now implemented the system of collecting names of those who come on each walk. As previously stated, we welcome non-members as guests for up to 3 walks, after which they are expected to join the group. Peter.

Footpath news

A recent ramble in the Rufford area revealed two problems which have been reported to Lancashire CC and to Rufford Parish Council. Rufford Footpaths 9&10 form an important link from Brick Kiln Lane (and Mere Sands Wood) to the A59.

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The paths run alongside a sluice with a wooden edging kept in place by metal tie wires into the bank. Erosion has caused the wires to become exposed, with a significant trip hazard. Be careful walking down these paths.

Rufford FP18 runs through Brick Kiln Farm. On approaching the farm from either end there are now substantial signs referring to a temporary closure, diversion and restriction for dogs. There is no indication of why there is a closure or how long this is intended to last. Our group walked the correct line with a dog without hindrance or seeing any reason for the restriction. This seems like an attempt to limit the use of a public right of way, and it is an accepted principle that a dog is a 'usual accompaniment' to a walker. Providing the dog is kept under control there should be no problem.

Other Matters

We are still keen to encourage members to become new leaders. The Committee are willing to mentor; do a recce with, or back mark for them until they feel confident that they can manage by themselves. If you wish to take up the offer, please get in touch with any Committee Member.

Also, we would like to expand our range of start points for walks – suggestions please (with appropriate parking spots).

Membership Matters

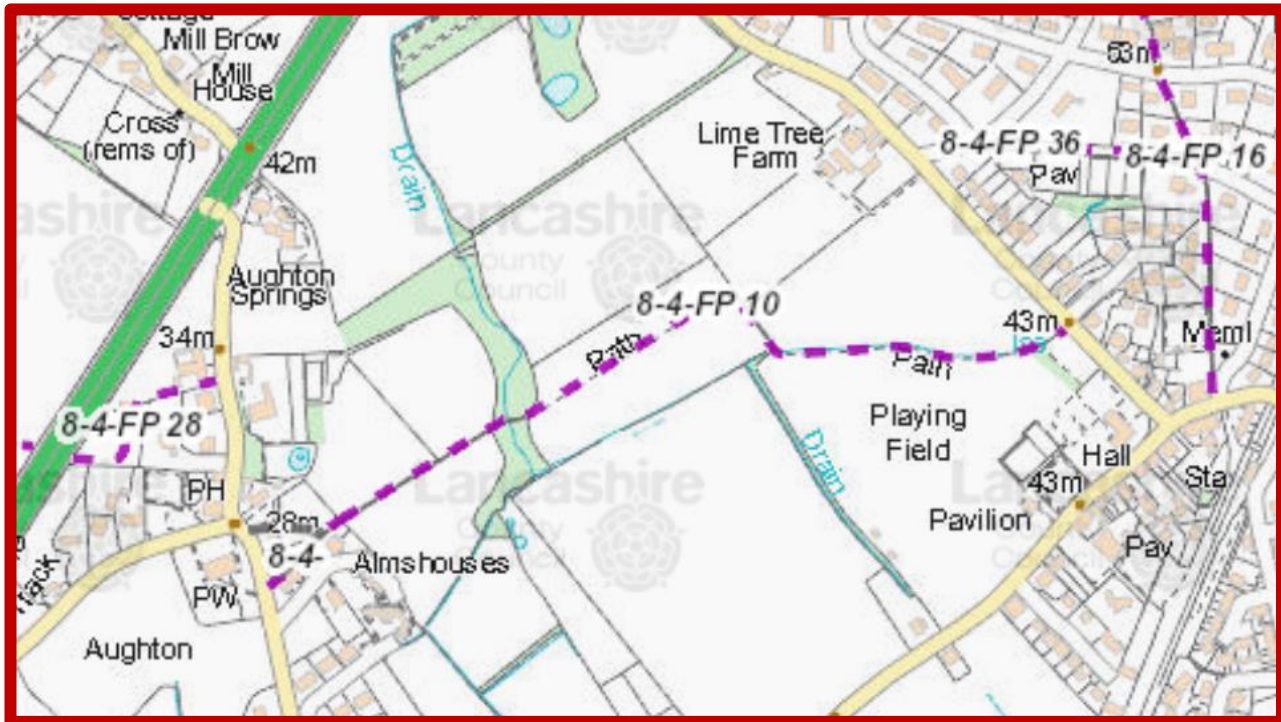
The current membership of the WLFM stands at 90, just under three quarters of our final total achieved last financial year and somewhat better than the position last February. This is often a time of year when people tend to hibernate, so many thanks to those who have already renewed and I hope that we can keep the good progress we have had so far.

John.

Committee Contact Numbers

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Post currently vacant	Secretary	
Ann Robinson	Rambles Secretary	01695 571303
John Partington	Membership & Gift Aid Secretary	01695 421408
Karen Jennings	Treasurer	01695 570349
Doreen Bird	Footpath Inspector	0151 526 5625
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Christine Hill	Committee Member	01772 816486
Tommy Wadkin	Committee Member	01695 735785

"Ron Gordon Way" – Aughton Footpath 10.



The path runs for about 1 mile from Aughton Village Hall to St Michael's Church. With cooperation from Lancashire County Council, Aughton Parish Council, the landowner and a contractor (Maiden Landscapes) the Merseyside & West Cheshire Group has done a substantial job of clearance, built a bridge over a brook and put in gates, fences and signs. **See a "before & after" pair of pictures on the home page of our Website.** In addition they have replaced the stile where FP10 meets the A59 with a kissing gate, provided by LCC. The project cost the group £1800, which was funded through a surplus on their Public Rambles over several years. We are most grateful to Merseyside & West Cheshire for their efforts and the use of their resources within West Lancashire. More information about their activities can be found at www.publicrambles.org.uk

Do try the refurbished path out, but also remember that, in spite of the considerable improvements, there are still muddy fields to contend with, so you still need good footwear.

For details of West Lancashire Ramblers local walks please visit :-
www.ramblers.org.uk/west-lancashire
or contact Geoff Wright (01772 812034).